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DIVISION OF SCHOOL
AT URBANA, ILL.

Keep Your Kids In School!

The School 
ATTENDANCE
Initiative





If you receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

(TANF) and your children are in first through eighth grades, you should know that your children's school attendance can affect your TANF grant.

It's important for children to attend school. And now, if your children do not go to school regularly, your TANF check may be reduced.

Why is regular school attendance important?

A child's future success or failure is set at a very young age. A child who is absent often in the third grade, for example, is more likely to drop out of high school than a child who attends school regularly. Going to school every day is the best way for your child to get a good start in life.

Education will also affect what a child is likely to earn at work as an adult. The following chart shows how more education results in more money that an adult can earn:

Level of Education	Average Yearly Earnings
<i>High school dropout</i>	<i>\$12,809</i>
<i>High school graduate</i>	<i>\$18,737</i>
<i>Some college</i>	<i>\$19,666</i>
<i>Associate degree</i>	<i>\$24,398</i>
<i>Bachelor's degree</i>	<i>\$32,629</i>

What is the School Attendance Initiative?

The School Attendance Initiative is a joint effort by the school, the Department of Human Services (DHS) and community groups in your area to help ensure that your kids attend school every day.

Your child's school and your local DHS office will monitor the school attendance of your children in grades one through eight. School officials will identify children who do not attend school regularly. Some examples of when a school thinks children are missing too much school are:

- A combination of being absent, arriving late or leaving early within a 30-day period.
- A pattern of absences such as being absent every Friday or being late or leaving early within a 30-day period.
- A pattern of all children in the family being absent on the same day.

How will I know if my child is absent too much?

The school will send you a notice if your child is missing too much school. This note will tell you that your child's school attendance must be improved.

What will happen if my child continues missing too much school?

If your child continues missing school, the school may refer your family to a community agency, such as social service agency, counseling service, health agency or a truancy alternative program. A meeting between you and the community agency will be set up to discuss improving your child's school attendance. The community agency will work with your family and the school to develop a service plan to improve your child's school attendance.

If your family does not go to this meeting or does not participate in the service plan, your TANF check will be sent to the community agency. You will then need to go to the community agency each month to pick up your check. This is called a protective payee plan.

Why would my check be sent to a community agency?

Your check would be sent to the community agency only if you did not work with the agency to try to improve your child's school attendance. Going to the community agency to pick-up your check gives you a chance to have regular contact with the agency and get services you need to get your child to school every day.

The community agency will work with you on the causes of poor school attendance. When you have met with the community agency, cooperated with the service plan developed to improve your child's school attendance and school attendance has improved, DHS will again send your cash benefits directly to you (to an Illinois Link account). If school attendance has not improved, then your cash grant will be reduced.

Would I ever lose my TANF cash grant?

If your check has been sent to the community agency and the agency has been offering services to you for at least three months and your child's school attendance has not improved, your TANF cash grant will be reduced.

What if my child changes schools?

If your child changes schools and the community agency serves the area around the new school, the protective payee plan will stay in effect. If the community agency does not serve the new area or school, that protective payee plan would be discontinued.



What should I do if I believe the school's records are not correct?

If you think the school has incorrectly reported your child's attendance, contact the school to discuss your child's attendance records.

May I change community agencies if there is more than one in my area?

If you would like to change to a different community agency, you can talk to your worker at your DHS office to see if you can change agencies.

How can I appeal an action taken by DHS?

As with any action taken by DHS, you have the right to appeal. To file an appeal, you should contact your local DHS office or call the Department's Appeals Line at 1-800-435-0774 (voice) or 1-312-793-2697 (TTY).

How can I get more information about the School Attendance Initiative or other DHS programs?

Call or visit your local DHS office. A worker at the local office will answer any questions you have. If you do not know where your local DHS office is or are unable to go there, call:

1-800-252-8635

1-800-447-6404 (TTY)

Illinois Department of Human Services

Bureau of Customer Inquiry and Assistance

Monday - Friday

(except state holidays)

Quick Answer System hours: 7:30 a.m. - 7 p.m.

Representatives available: 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

For answers to your questions, you may also write:

Illinois Department of Human Services

Bureau of Provider Assistance

and Correspondence

100 South Grand Avenue, East • Springfield, Illinois 62762

Visit our website at: www.state.il.us/agency/dhs



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